

essential KITCHEN BATHROOM BEDROOM

A CALM *haven*

Natural light, plenty of storage and stunning glass architecture make this an enviable family kitchen

PICTURES MIA LIND | WORDS EMMA FOALE

A typical scene in the capacious kitchen of Lydia and Richard Bell's Kensington home might involve the whole family sat around the large island enjoying a homemade meal or it may reveal the creative and fun side to its owners.

On first viewing, the couple were drawn to this original 1950s brick house, now rendered white, because it was wider than normal and offered lots of potential for them to create a family space with plenty of light and room to entertain. They moved in at the end of March with their three children Tom, nine, Jake, seven, and Maya, five, and began organising architectural work on the house and garden before finding Sola Kitchens, through very positive word of mouth, to install their new kitchen. With a brief for a contemporary classic kitchen with modern appliances and plenty of work surface and storage, Managing Director Sofia Bunc, soon set to work on translating this wish list into a practical reality.

At the start of the project it was easy to see how everything would come together, Lydia explains. 'Sofia created digital images so we could visualise the look. This was very helpful as it was very hard to imagine the potential of the space due to basement construction.' Lydia and Richard discussed several different layouts with Sofia before ending up with the current one which they're really pleased with. The first option was a U-shaped kitchen with an island but they agreed that it was a bit too traditional for them. As she explains, 'A big consideration was the seating at the end of the island, and to make sure it could seat at least six people.' The couple both enjoy cooking and baking and with all this extra seating it makes entertaining and family mealtimes easy.

When it came to fitting the furniture, Sofia describes, 'There were a few challenges, particularly as there were two vertical pillars towards the end of the kitchen, one through the dresser and another through one of the tall units. We had to plan very carefully to make sure we could build around and hide them.' Combining the fitted cabinets with a freestanding island and a natural colour palette of soft, cool blue and shades of green creates a harmonious and spacious feel that links with the outdoors and makes the most of the pleasant garden views.

All in all, the couple are really thrilled with the result and have since enjoyed shopping in the Harrods kitchen department for additional accessories and Porta Romana for freestanding lamps. Describing the pleasure she takes from her new kitchen, Lydia reveals, 'We spend a lot of time as a family in the kitchen whether it's eating, cooking, doing homework or drawing. It's our entertaining space.'

SEATING

The freestanding island creates a central gathering space for family and friends with seating for up to six people. The bespoke stools have been painted in London Sky by eicó paints, the same shade as the units, and the seats are made from luxurious sheepskin.



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GLASS ARCHITECTURE

Making an impressive statement feature, the bespoke floating glass stairs and doors out to the garden are by Lightscape Design. They allow an abundance of natural light into the kitchen area where the family spend a lot of quality time.

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EXTENSIVE STORAGE

One side of the kitchen is mostly windows so this posed quite a challenge when it came to fulfilling Richard and Lydia's wish for plenty of storage. However, they decided upon a wall of tall cabinets from the Sola Kitchens Newport range. The cabinetry houses a fridge and freezer, an over stack with oven, steam combi and warming drawer, all from Gaggenau. There's also a spacious double door larder with drawers, wine rack and door hanging racks for food storage. Lastly, there's a double door storage cabinet with shelves which has been built around a vertical pillar.



Kitchen profile

An original restored 1950s brick house in Kensington with a light-filled kitchen is given a modern and uplifting feel with a bespoke, hand-painted solid wood kitchen from the Sola Kitchens Newport range. The classic shaker-style doors are made from solid ash with an added beading around every door and drawer. Worktops are kept simple in durable Silestone Lagoon Leather and the island tabletop is in solid white stained oak from Spekva. Kitchens (including cabinetry, worktop, appliances and installation) start from £28,000.

SOLA KITCHENS
121 Munster Road, Fulham,
London SW6 6DH.
Tel 0203 004 0898.
solakitchens.com

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SOFIA BUNE
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
SOLA KITCHENS

Where did you begin with the kitchen design?

We discussed several different layouts before ending up with the current design. The first option was a U-shaped kitchen with an island, but the clients thought that was a bit too traditional and also took too much of the light from the roof light at the end of the room (above the blackboard).

How did you choose the materials?

The clients wanted traditional, solid wood kitchen units with a mix of stone and wood worktops. We used white stained oak interior in the cabinets and matched it with a white stained solid oak worktop for part of the kitchen island. The carcasses are solid blockwood and all drawers and inserts are white stained solid oak.

And can you describe the island and choice of materials? Is the island completely freestanding and can it be moved?

The island, from the Sola Kitchens Newport range, is completely freestanding and could in theory be moved. However, with the large honed marble effect Silestone and white stained solid oak slab worktop it is very heavy, so it would be difficult in practice. We also have electricity connecting to the island so you would have to be careful when moving it. The idea behind the island was to make it large but not feel too heavy. So, we lifted the whole island up on a leg system so that there's plenty of air underneath. We also put LED lights under the island for practical reasons and to make it feel lighter.

Q&A

TAPWARE

There's a tap to cater for all needs in this prep area including a Grohe Mibra sink mixer tap, a Grohe Blue chilled and sparkling water tap and a chrome Quooker boiling water tap.

SMALL DETAILS

Maintaining a feeling of spaciousness and a clean look gives this kitchen a cohesive feeling. Fitted stainless steel rails in the freestanding island are handy for hanging tea towels and oven gloves on. Flush-fitted sockets have been painted in the same Flint Gray colour as the island.

WORK SURFACES

Lydia and Richard saw a picture of another kitchen by Sola Kitchens with a similar combination of stone and wood surfaces and really liked it. They chose oak for the breakfast table and there's a slight height difference to emphasise the difference between the two materials.



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LIGHT AND SPACE

The layout works hard to make the most of the sunlight that shines in through the roof light above the blackboard and through the large glass doors that open out onto the garden. The three hand-beaten brass pendant lights by Tom Dixon, are positioned in a run above the island for essential focal lighting over the prep and eating areas.



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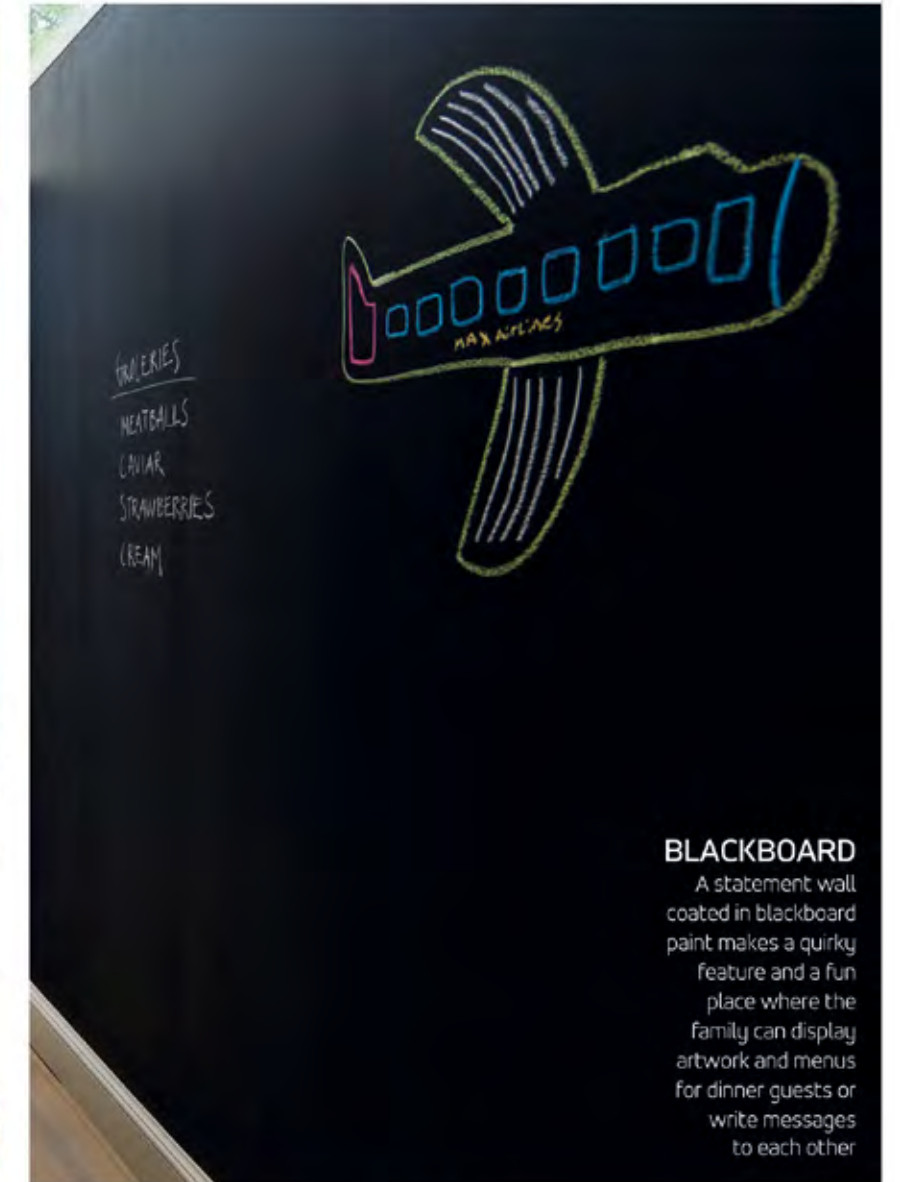
LAYOUT

The hob on the island is on the same side as the sink and dishwasher. They're not exactly opposite each other because they wanted to make sure that more than one person can work in the kitchen at the same time without bumping in to each other. The fridge and the larder are on the other side of the island, while the island is in the middle so it is within reach from both sides and provides a useful preparation space.



KITCHEN DRESSER

A benchstanding dresser unit stands at the end of the sink run. The cabinet hides a pillar that runs vertically about 900mm from the blackboard wall – you can see the cut out inside the cabinet. This painted furniture piece creates storage space for wine glasses – for all other cups, plates and day-to-day glasses there's space in the island drawers.



BLACKBOARD

A statement wall coated in blackboard paint makes a quirky feature and a fun place where the family can display artwork and menus for dinner guests or write messages to each other.



PRACTICAL DETAILS

Two integrated tray pull-outs are made bespoke to fit exactly and are made from solid white stained oak.



CUTLERY DRAWER

The solid white stained oak cutlery drawers are made bespoke to fit.

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'We spend a lot of time as a family in the kitchen whether it's eating, cooking, doing homework or drawing. It's our entertaining space'

OPEN-PLAN

White stained oak floorboards provide a seamless link between the kitchen and dining area and continues the light and airy feel. A painted sideboard between the two spaces provides storage and somewhere to display flowers

MIRROR

A circular weathered oak mirror, from Design & Home by Flamant, reflects light and links the cooking and dining areas. It hangs above a Chesney's fireplace



Stockists

APPLIANCES AND FIXTURES

Vario RC472200 **fridge**, from around £5,000; Vario FR411200 **freezer**, from around £3,800; C1481102 **induction**, from around £1,700; Similar BOP211110 **oven**, from around £2,000; Similar Series 200 **warming drawer**, from around £1,000; Similar BSP220/221 **steam oven**, from £2,200; DF460162 **dishwasher**, from around £1,400; DA041061 **cutlery drawer**, from around £75; all Gaggenau. CBU1 - BG (900x440x300mm) built-in **extractor**, £1,703; SEM2 external motor, £688, both Westin Design. BlancoClarion 550-U **sink** around £532; BlancoClarion 340-U **sink**, around £472, both Blanco. ISE Evolution 200 **waste disposal**, around £400, Insinkerator. PR03-VAQ Design chrome **boiling water tap**, £658, Quooker. Minta **sink mixer** in Chrome, £354; Similar Blue **chilled and sparkling water tap** in Chrome with filter starter kit, from around £1,800, both Grohe.

FURNITURE, FLOORING AND ACCESSORIES

Cabinetry painted in London Sky, from around £20,000; **freestanding island** painted in Flint Gray, from around £21,000; **stools** painted in London Sky, £595 each, all from the Sola Kitchens Newport range. Similar **chalkboard blackboard paint**, from £21.32 for 1 litre, Ecos Organic Paint. **Paint on cabinetry and stools** in London Sky, from £13.75 for Alterior Matt 1 litre; **Paint on island** Flint Gray, from £13.75 for Alterior Matt 1 litre, both eico paints. **Wall paint** Reseda from the Paint & Paper Library, from £21 per litre, Alexander's of Ipsden. Similar Nebula **work surface** in Lagoon, Suede finish, prices start from £400 per sqm, Silestone. Similar 30mm solid white stained oak **work surface**, from around £300, Spekva. Similar **floorboards**, Harmony European oak flooring, from £97m², Top Floor Rugs. Similar **sideboard**, Rosendal sideboard, £2,250, Sasha Waddell. Oslo **table**, from £3,595, Brown Antiques. CH24 Wishbone **chair** by Carl Hansen, from £493, Skandium. Stchu-Moon 02 **pendant lamps** by Catellani and Smith, around £999, Lighting Deluxe. Bead light tall **pendant lights**, £275 each, Tom Dixon. Metro Contemporary fireplace, £1,074, Chesney's. Estelle **mirror**, £902; Julia **vases**, £57.25 each, both Design & Home by Flamant. Oyster **bowl**, from £20.90, Mateus.

ARCHITECTURE AND GARDEN DESIGN

Glass stairs and doors Lightscape Design
Interior design and architecture Ross Duguid Architecture
Garden Findwillow Landscape and Building

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DINING AREA

Lydia and Richard wanted the dining space to have a slightly more adult and cosy feel. Wishbone chairs from Skandium and pendant lights lined with gold coloured leaf from Catellani and Smith add a sophisticated and grown-up touch. The soft green shade on the walls keeps the room feeling airy and calm

